



## **Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee held on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 6.00pm**

**Present:** Cllrs M Swinbank (Chair), P Edge, M Harrington, J Humphries, A Symmonds and L Wearn.

**In attendance:** Councillor Mavin; W Batey, Town Clerk and Chef Officer; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer and 3 members of the public including Tricia Cresswell (ARRA) for planning application 17/04143/FUL.

**P17/86**

### **Apologies**

Councillors Broom, Fletcher, Watson and Westendarp.

**P17/87**

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Wearn declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning application 17/04143/FUL and advised that she wished to speak as a member of the public.

**P17/88**

### **Request for Dispensation**

Councillor Wearn applied for and requested a dispensation to speak about planning application 17/04143/FUL and listen to the discussion. The committee voted to allow this.

**RESOLVED: To grant a dispensation to Councillor Wearn to enable her to speak as a member of the public on planning application 17/04143/FUL and listen to the discussion.**

**P17/89**

### **Matters Arising from the minutes of the previous meeting**

None.

#### Planning Outcomes:

**18/00182/PRUTPO Garden Cottage, Alnmouth Road, Alnwick NE66 2QG** Tree Preservation Order – T12, 13, 14, 15, 20 Limes, Remove epicormic growth to first branch. Remove deadwood; T16 – Maple, Remove lower limb growing over house roof back to main stem. Remove crossing branch growing over field. Tidy old snapped branch over field; T17 – Lime, Remove epicormic growth up to first branch. Prune to allow 3m clearance from house roof; T18 – Common horse chestnut, Remove major deadwood throughout whole crown area (Deadwood > 25mm in diameter). Inspect cracking to stem; T19 – Lime, Remove epicormic growth up to first branch. Prune to allow 3m clearance from house; T21 – Lime, Remove epicormic growth up to first branch. Deadwood. Prune to allow 3m clearance from house roof – **GRANTED.**

**18/00096/LBC Bolams Mill, Dispensary Street, Alnwick NE66 1LN** Listed Building Consent for retrospective construction of a gas and water meter enclosure by means of extension - **GRANTED.**

**17/02587/LBC Inland Revenue, Bondgate Hall, Bondgate Without, Alnwick** Listed Building Consent to widen gates at rear of building and install double glazing in existing frames where possible and where not possible replace frames – **GRANTED.**

**18/00514/LBC 14 Bondgate Without, Alnwick** Listed Building Consent: for removal of an internal modern lightweight partition wall between bedroom 2/4 at second floor level and return to original layout into one room – **GRANTED.**

**P17/90**

### **To minute responses made since last meeting**

**18/00750/FUL Letchside Alnwick Moor Alnwick NE66 2AJ**

Demolition of existing garage and construction of a new garage – **NO OBJECTIONS.**

**18/00079/FUL Land North Of The Treehouse The Alnwick Garden Denwick Lane Alnwick Northumberland NE66 1YU** Play village comprising cabins, chapel, hall, play structure and ancillary accommodation in a landscaped setting -

Alnwick Town Council have **NO OBJECTIONS** but have the following comments to make which they would request are considered and, if appropriate, included as Conditions attached to the planning approval, if given.

Note - References to some of the relevant policies in the 'made' Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan are included. The Neighbourhood Plan should be used when assessing this application.

**1. LANDSCAPE SETTING**

The effect of the proposal on the historic and landscape setting needs further consideration. The Capability Brown Landscape to the north, the Alnwick Castle and indeed the Alnwick Garden itself are all important features. Views from both the approaches to Alnwick from the north, the views from the castle and the gardens should all be considered both in summer and in winter. The view from the Pastures footpath across the river Aln is the one most likely to be affected and should be awarded due consideration.

Policy HD1 of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan - Protecting Landscape Setting: Development proposed in the Parishes of Alnwick and Denwick will be expected to be designed to avoid: visual harm to the landscape character and setting of town and village.

**2. NOISE POLLUTION**

A noise assessment must be undertaken particularly relating to the Long Hall, and NCC public protection offices must be satisfied that adequate controls are in place to prevent the occurrence of a noise nuisance. The effect, particularly on residential areas in Allerburn Lea and the proposed new development at the Allerburn House site could be vulnerable to disturbance. It is unclear from the current plans whether any of the windows will open and if so, which, if any, will open towards Allerburn Lea.

**3. LIGHT POLLUTION**

The effect of light pollution to the night sky needs to be assessed. This could impact the historic and landscape setting and also the view of the night sky from the surrounding area.

Policy ENV11 of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan – Reducing Light Pollution.

**4. CONSTRUCTION / MATERIALS**

There appears to be little information on the materials and colours of those materials to be used on the Play Village structures. Assessment of these details is vital in consideration of point 1. above. The sensitive use of colours and materials could have a large impact on the visual acceptability of the proposal.

Policy E5 of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan- Economy / Tourism Development New tourism development in or adjacent to the town, particularly that which will help grow Alnwick and Denwick as a year round tourism destination, will be supported subject to all of the following being met:

- i) Development is located where it will complement business and services in the town and will not adversely impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre;
- ii) Development will contribute positively to the weekend and evening economy of the town;
- iii) The scale and character of development will not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the natural and historic environment;
- iv) Development can be accommodated within the physical infrastructure of the town;
- v) Development will not have adverse impacts on living conditions in residential areas;
- vi) Development will not have a significantly detrimental impact on the transport network and travel patterns.

## 5. TRANSPORT LINKS / ROUTES TO TOWN CENTRE

**CAR PARKING** - The parking arrangements need to be critiqued. The Transport Assessment suggests that there is sufficient capacity in the current car parks for the new development. It bases its figures on a 'three hour' stay per vehicle and has a spare capacity of 71 places (out of 1300 + 20 coaches) at peak times. As the aim of the development as stated, is to turn the attractions from a single day destination (already one would assume more than a three hour visit) into a two day attraction, then we would question the use of the 'three hour' only stay as the basis for calculating car park capacity. A visit to the Garden, Castle and new Play Village plus probably lunch on site would take considerably longer than three hours or indeed three hours a day over two days. What would the effect of an average four or five hour stay time have on the car park spare capacity?

Overflowing of the car park could have major implications on the already constrained parking situation in the town in the peak month of August, and therefore impact detrimentally on the town which local people also need to access for services at these times.

**CYCLE ROUTES / PARKING** - The current provision of cycle parking on the site is very low and no further provision appears to be included in the proposal. As the encouragement of cycling (active travel) is central to transport policy, then adequate on-site cycle parking should be provided. Furthermore adequate signage needs to be put in place so that visitors can find the cycling facilities.

Cyclists coming from / going to the town presently have to use Denwick lane. This is quite narrow and largely walled on both sides with the south side having no footway for a distance from the War Memorial to Fisher Lane. This section is also all on a bend so restricting visibility. For safety reasons, a dual cycle path / footpath could be considered through Column Field along the route of the existing footpath. This would take away much of the risk of conflicts between motorists and cyclists at this point. Furthermore when the proposed Alnwick Cycle Track is developed at the Eastern end of Fisher Lane, this will be an important route for young people visiting it by cycle.

There may be other opportunities within the Garden / Castle grounds for a cycle route into the town, but the route stated above could serve the purpose.

In the Transport Assessment accompanying the proposal the following references to Government policy are made: 'The Government's long term strategy for transport is set out in "The Future of Transport - a Network for 2030" (DfT White Paper, 2004).'

'An underlying objective of the strategy set out in the White Paper is to deal with the pressures of increasing demand for travel by striking the right balance between environmental, economic and social objectives, now and into the future. In terms of the road network, this means:'

'Creating a culture and improved quality of local environment, so that cycling and walking are seen as an alternative to car travel for short journeys, particularly for children. '

'Within the core planning principles as highlighted in para. 17 of the NPPF it states that planning should "...actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable..'. '

### Policy TRA2 of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan - Cycling

Proposals for major development will be required to have safe and convenient cycle access. The enhancement of provision for cycling including existing cycle routes will be supported.

**ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING POINTS** - The provision of electric car charging points currently on site and in the proposals appears to be zero. Again as transport policy seeks to reduce the emissions of private cars, and as sales of electric vehicles are rising exponentially in the UK, then adequate electric car charging points should be provided. Furthermore the

presence and location of these points needs to be signposted and advertised to encourage electric car use.

From the Low Emission Partnership Guidance for Planning Applications: 'Low Emission Topic Note 1. '

'Provision of EV charging points via planning agreements Prepared by Green Sphere on behalf of the Low Emission Partnership'.

'The National Planning Policy Framework states (para 35) that 'Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to [...] incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles''

'2.6 For other types of development (e.g. commercial, retail and industrial), requirements of around 10% is common, though there is greater variation here in the detail, some include an option to deliver in two phases (e.g. 5% then another 5%). ''

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING - from observation there is a safety issue at the pedestrian crossing to the car park. Pedestrians exiting the Garden site occasionally cross the road directly from the pedestrian entrance instead of turning right for a few metres and using the light controlled crossing. They then find that they cannot enter the car park at the double gates (which seem to be usually locked) and have to walk on the roadway along-side the metal pedestrian barrier for a few metres to the location of the light controlled crossing where they can return to the footpath. Whilst outside of the barrier, they are on a narrow stretch of road and in some considerable danger of being caught between a vehicle and the barrier, particularly if another vehicle is coming the other way. The design solution is not obvious, but with considerable extra visitor numbers it should certainly be addressed.

#### Policy TRA1 of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan - Walking

Proposals for development will be required to have safe and convenient pedestrian access. The enhancement of provision for walking including public rights of way will be supported.

The pedestrian link between the Garden and Town is very good, but further consideration should be given to the cycling link. The existing main pedestrian link is of generous width, but considering the visitor numbers in summer would undoubtedly not be acceptable as a dual use pedestrian / cycling route. Consideration therefore should be given to another route to the town centre. Identifying the attraction as a 'two day' destination suggests that visitors will be staying locally overnight. They will only be encouraged to walk or cycle to the attraction where good, safe facilities exist - particularly if they have children with them.

The corridors between the Garden / Castle / Play Village area and the Town centre could be enhanced to encourage visitors to explore further into the historic town centre. There are currently maps and some signage to help visitors new to the area who have entered the Garden / Castle / Play Village area from the Denwick lane car park understand where they are and what else may be worthy of visiting close at hand. Every effort should be made to enhance this aspect of the design.

A feasibility study was recently conducted by NCC on improvements which could be made to Alnwick Town Centre. An aspect of the report was the improvements required to the connection corridors and signage between the town and the Garden / Castle. It may be appropriate at this stage to re-visit this assessment and request a contribution to this project.

The economic viability of the town is enhanced by the proximity of the Alnwick Garden / Castle attractions. This is welcomed by the community, but even small enhancements to the numbers of visitors reaching the town centre would have a considerable positive economic impact on the town especially in the less busy seasons. The historic nature and numerous independent shops are attractive to visitors, so enhanced connectivity can be viewed as a mutually reinforcing aspect of the proposed development- a 'win-win' in vernacular terms.

**18/00672/FUL Allerburn House Denwick Lane Alnwick Northumberland NE66 1YY** Proposed refurbishment of the Lodge, conversion of Allerburn House into 3 apartments, demolition of adhoc extensions to Allerburn House and the erection of 14 new build units

Alnwick Town Council OBJECTS to this application due to the following:

Location - the proposed 3 storey dwellings would still have a negative visual impact and reduce the visibility of the retained part of Allerburn House. The plans show that 2 of the 6 proposed three-storey properties have been moved but we feel that in their current proposed location all 6 three-storey properties should be moved closer to the rear of the plots.

Density – there are currently 6 three-storey properties which we feel is too many in the proposed location. If this location is to be maintained then the overall number of three-storey properties should be reduced.

Height - the proposed 3 storey dwellings still have a negative visual impact on neighbouring properties and in relation to the retained part of Allerburn House. The plans show 2 of the 6 proposed three-storey properties being moved but we feel that all 6 three-storey properties would need to be moved closer to the rear of the plots to reduce this negative visual impact.

The application does not support the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan policies:

#### H4 Housing Design

New housing, including conversions and the development of individual plots in the plan area, will be required to demonstrate that a high standard of design will be achieved.

#### HD4 Design in the Wider Town

Outside the historic core of the town new development (including extensions, alterations and changes of use to existing buildings) is encouraged to take the following design principles into account:

- a) Footprint: expected to respect the density and grain of the surrounding distinctive suburban townscape
- b) Design: expected to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness whilst not discouraging appropriate innovation
- c) Quality: expected to respect and enhance the quality of the surrounding suburban townscape and any historic content, in design, materials, detailing and finishes;
- e) Size and scale: expected to respond positively to local character
- f) Materials: expected to be sympathetic to the local materials that are traditional in the surrounding suburban townscape

The policies in the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan which was made in July 2017 should be used when reviewing all planning applications within Alnwick & Denwick.

Councillor Wearn reported that she had received several comments from residents about the proposed development at Allerburn House.

The Town Clerk advised that this application was going to the North Area Local Council on April 19<sup>th</sup> and advised that he would email councillors to ask if anyone wanted to attend to give the Town Councils views and added that the Town Council had until April 17<sup>th</sup> to let NCC know if anyone would be attending the meeting to speak.

**18/00728/OUT Land at Willowburn Trading Estate, Anwick** Outline application for the development of approximately 100 no. units with associated access

Alnwick Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application on the following grounds:

**1) This planning application is premature**

Application 18/00728/OUT is substantially similar to application no. 16/03642/OUT which is being decided by the Planning Inspectorate at a Public Inquiry in July; the only substantial change in this application is the removal of the former NCC depot site – the applicant confirms this at 1.2 in the Planning Statement. We would ask NCC Officers to discuss this with the applicant and request that they withdraw this application until the result of the Public Inquiry on application 16/03642/OUT is known.

**2) The planning application is contradictory to existing and emerging policies**

a) The adopted development plan for the Alnwick area is the Alnwick District Core Strategy which in Policy S9 seeks to protect existing employment sites. Although the policy predates the NPPF it remains consistent with Paragraph 22 of the Framework in acknowledging that where there is no shortage of employment sites or the site is no longer appropriate for employment use it may be redeveloped. Neither of these exceptions apply as set out below and with regard to paragraph 22 of the NPPF there is reasonable prospect that the site could be redeveloped and upgraded for employment use and indeed that is the most appropriate use.

b) The planning application contradicts the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan which was “Made” less than a year ago on 27<sup>th</sup> 2017: Specifically, the application directly contradicts policies E3 and E4 of the “made” Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, which state:

*POLICY E3*

*Future Use of Existing Employment Sites*

*Proposals for the re-use or redevelopment of existing main industrial sites will be supported provided that they contribute to the creation and retention of employment and/or re-investment in the built fabric and infrastructure of these employment areas. **Housing (C3) and retail (A1) will not be permitted on these sites.***

*POLICY E4*

*Development on South Road*

*Development which provides new employment opportunities, commercial and business development (including under policy TC3) along South Road will be supported provided that proposals do not significantly impact upon the retail and commercial role of the town centre and do not have significant detrimental impact on established housing areas in South Road.*

The original planning application, no. 16/03642/OUT was refused purely because it contradicted Neighbourhood Plan Policy E3, above, and this new application similarly contradicts Policy E3.

c) Part of the Economy and Employment section of the Neighbourhood Plan included consideration of the Willowburn Industrial Estate and whether it should be allowed to cease to be industrial land. It was fully appreciated that the existing development on the estate for the most part was substandard for modern commercial businesses but the decision was taken that because the site is well located close to the A1 southern junction and largely unconstrained by surrounding residential development that it should be retained as a business site and encouragement given for redevelopment for a wide range of employment generating uses. **Retail and residential redevelopment was specifically excluded in policy E3 of the Neighbourhood Plan.**

d) The Neighbourhood Plan carries significant weight as a material consideration in the planning process.

e) The proposed deallocation for industry of Willowburn Industrial Estate raised in 2016 has now been withdrawn and Willowburn Industrial Estate remains and will remain allocated for industry; this is a decision by Northumberland County Council.

### **3) The construction of housing amongst industrial buildings would create unreasonable operational constraints on hours of business and potentially dangerous conflicts of use at the site**

This application proposes new housing amongst industrial sites using large and heavy industrial plant and vehicles such as Rickerby Ltd. and Lloyd Ltd. agricultural contractors/engineers and James McLean ( joiners, building contractors and plant and tool sales and hire), all of whom require year-round unrestricted access to their industrial premises during unsocial hours and are required as a core part of their business to undertake engineering works during night-times which would be at odds with any adjacent housing developments. One of these companies is compelled to load and offload heavy plant from low-loader vehicles on the Industrial Estate loop road as the low-loaders are too large to access their yard; the presence of housing with resident children nearby would obviously create a potentially dangerous situation.

### **4) There is a shortage of industrial land and units**

a) There is already a shortage of land for B class industrial uses in Alnwick

b) The development of housing at Willowburn would reduce the land allocation for business use by almost 2 hectares.

c) Alnwick needs land allocated for industrial use and more sustainable business development to encourage future businesses to provide employment for the working age population which is being attracted by already substantial housing development over the Neighbourhood Plan period to 2031.

d) Alnwick also has a shortage of small affordable business premises, particularly for start-up businesses. The former NCC Depot site is currently being assessed by Arch for retention and development into units for this purpose.

### **5) There is already a plentiful supply of housing land**

a) Despite the withdrawal of the NLCPS, NCC published a five-year housing assessment in 2017 which allows for 850 to 900 houses per year across Northumberland, meaning that there is a likely 6.5-year supply in Northumberland at present, based on interim targets, and this assessment is strengthened by the housing target within the Neighbourhood Plan.

b) The Northumberland County Council Housing Needs Study (2016) concluded that the net annual need for affordable homes in Alnwick and Denwick amounts to only 7 units per annum; as the ADNP requires that all sites of over 10 housing units have at least 15% affordable housing, this need for 7 annually can be easily met so the applicant's proposed development at Willowburn Industrial Estate is not needed in order to provide for the identifiable housing needs in the Alnwick area.

c) There is therefore no justification for housing on an industrial estate at Willowburn: General housing is well provided for in Alnwick and its surrounding villages, affordable housing is catered for under the policies of the ADNP. Redeveloping Willowburn Industrial Estate for housing would not help with the overall balance of employment to housing provision and we need easily accessible employment opportunities such as those at Willowburn to slow the trend to an older population in the town.

### **6) Concerns for existing businesses at Willowburn**

a) Willowburn Industrial Estate is home to around twenty very active businesses including several – Rickerby, Lloyd and McLean - serving the important regional agricultural sector and, in the case of Pure Fishing, international export markets. These four businesses all provide permanent, well-paid, high-quality, full-time employment to around 120 people and

all four businesses have plans for expansion which are now at risk owing to the uncertainty created by the earlier planning application which is now at appeal (no. 16/03642/OUT) and this present planning application.

b) Alnwick Town Council is most concerned that the existing businesses at Willowburn Industrial Estate, together with valuable employment, will be placed under threat as a direct result of approval of this or the earlier planning application; some of the existing businesses have expressed serious concerns about having to move and some of the businesses remaining are worried about noise complaints from the proposed new housing, especially when undertaking emergency repairs to farm machinery overnight ready for action the following day.

c) It would appear that businesses currently occupying the site, may all in time, be forced to relocate. This would impose unnecessary disturbance on these businesses and could lead to the loss of employment if they were forced to close. We have no evidence to suggest that these businesses wish to relocate, consultation has shown quite the contrary.

### **7) Particular concerns for the future of Pure Fishing**

The Town Council has particular concerns about the unclear status of Pure Fishing (which includes the world-renowned House of Hardy) resulting from the redevelopment of Willowburn for housing: Not only is Pure Fishing a significant employer in Alnwick and enjoys a worldwide reputation as one of the premier fishing equipment manufacturers, it is also a significant tourist attraction at Alnwick, and this is now under threat from this development proposal because the Pure Fishing site is part of the proposed housing development.

### **8) Sustainability**

a) As there is a current shortage of industrial land and a current plentiful supply of housing land in Alnwick, the redevelopment of Willowburn Industrial Estate for housing would aggravate both these issues and therefore would be contrary to the social, environmental, economic and resource objectives of sustainability being achieved.

b) The planning application is not justified against reasonable alternatives as it would be far more sustainable to update the existing industrial site for industry than to develop greenfield land to relocate Willowburn's businesses.

c) In terms of the NPPF therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in this case.

### **Summary**

a) The Alnwick community was extensively involved in producing the Neighbourhood Plan "made" in July 2017 and as part of that exercise have specifically identified that they wish to see Willowburn Industrial Estate retained as a business site and encouragement to be given for redevelopment for employment generating uses; the proposal to develop housing on the site is therefore completely contradictory to the wishes of the community.

b) Development of housing at Willowburn Industrial Estate would result in the loss of employment land which, with investment, has the potential to be a valuable resource to the town's economy. Indeed, the recently-"made" Neighbourhood Plan identifies a potential shortage of employment land to 2031, it would therefore be inappropriate and short-sighted to grant permission for housing that would result in a loss of over 3 hectares of industrial land on an estate which is well-placed to accommodate a range of employment-related uses, and then possibly to have to develop more greenfield land for industry elsewhere.

c) Development of housing at Willowburn Industrial Estate would create conflicts between housing and business which many existing businesses at Willowburn say would lead to their closure or at the very least disruption of their operations. The loss of local employers and their jobs would clearly not represent support for economic growth and would potentially harm the local economy.

- d) If as a result of the development of housing at Willowburn Industrial Estate, businesses are forced to move, this will require the development of more greenfield land for industry, which is contrary to sustainability.
- e) The planning application for housing is not based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements where it is consistent with achieving sustainable development, rather this application appears to be a cynical action to release employment land for more lucrative housing development, which is not needed as there are many housing development sites in Alnwick already approved or identified through the neighbourhood planning process.
- f) One of the reasons given for redevelopment for housing is that the estate is in part run down but in fact there has been approximately £600,000 worth of investment in premises and infrastructure over the last 5 years by the active freeholders and lessees at Willowburn. In stark contrast to other businesses at Willowburn, Northern Commercial have not re-invested in nor maintained their site to make it attractive to new businesses. The high vacancy rates and the poor condition of the Northern Commercial premises is down to the running down and neglect of these premises.
- g) Paragraphs 4.3 – 4.7, 4.9 and 4.33-4.35 , 5.7 and 5.14 of the WYG Planning Statement accompanying the planning application makes repeated reference to NPPF and to NPPF Paragraph 22 which states that “planning policies should avoid the long-term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose” but this fails to take into account the fact that the site’s limited prospects for industrial development are largely down to the site owner’s own lack of investment in and general neglect of the site for many years. The “substantive repair costs that preclude them being realistically brought back into use” mentioned in paragraph 5.8 on page 14 are only substantive because the premises owned by Northern Commercial have not been invested-in and have essentially been neglected for so long.
- h) Paragraph 4.35 at the foot of page 10 of the WYG Planning Statement states that Policy E3 of the Neighbourhood Plan “provides no flexibility for non-employment uses to be brought forward”. This is irrelevant in the context of paragraph 22 of the NPPF where (as in this case) there remains reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment use, only the derelict state of the site resulting from the owner’s neglect has deterred investors. The neighbourhood plan took the opportunity to review the future of the site as encouraged by paragraph 22 and the local community agreed with its retention as an employment site because of its location, accessibility to the A1 southern junction and absence of residential uses in the area constraining activity.
- i) Paragraphs 4.36 and 4.37 on page 11 of the WYG Planning Statement claim that “in the clear absence of an up-to-date Local Plan, it is impossible to demonstrate the robustness of the ADNP as there is no up-to-date policy based upon which it has been prepared.....the housing target within the emerging NLPCS has been withdrawn and is currently being reviewed.....In this scenario there is demonstrably no up-to-date housing requirement on which to base the ADNP.” However, NCC’s Head of Planning has advised ATC that there is no link at all between the Neighbourhood Plan and the Core Strategy as the appellants have suggested; the Neighbourhood Plan stands entirely on its own.

Alnwick Town Council therefore **OBJECTS** to this application and requests that ADCS Policy S9 and the Neighbourhood Plan policies E3 and E4 should be respected and application for housing at Willowburn Industrial Estate should be refused.

## **18/00682/CCD Alnwick Playhouse And Arts Centre Bondgate Without Alnwick NE66 1PQ**

Refurbishment and reorganisation of the internal elements and refurbishment of external elements of the building.

The Town Council are disappointed that there was no consultation with the community regarding the proposed layout and facilities at the Playhouse.

The Town Council is supportive of the proposed community hub and the refurbishment of the Playhouse. In particular the new plans for the auditorium, café, toilets and improved access are seen as positive. However, there is concern about the limited space allocated for the library and Tourist Information Centre and as a result, the Town Council **OBJECTS** to the application. In particular:

- a) The space allocated for the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) appears very small. The facility appears to be shrinking down to have 2 display racks and a shared customer desk with the library, which is accessed across the small library activity space. The Town Council does not feel the TIC service in the new layout, is given the importance it needs in such a high profile tourism destination. It is concerned that during the busy summer months the facility will not be adequate, will not be able to cope with a sudden influx of visitors – such as a coach full of visitors and appears to have no storage. The customer interactions and dealing with routine telephone calls are also likely to cause some disruption to library users. The existing Alnwick TIC has a floor area of over 50m<sup>2</sup> plus a store room and whilst it is acknowledged that the retail element of the business is planned to be less, we do not feel that the floor area allocated is sufficient.
- b) The space allocated for the Library also appears very small. Town Councillors have reviewed the Government recommendations set out in 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021' report (updated 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018). This is summarised in the Appendix to this document. The general view of the Town Council is that the space allocated to the service has been used, rather than a proper review undertaken of what is actually needed.

Overall, the Town Council feels that relocating two of the three services into the community hub may well work, but the three services identified in the layout proposed, will not have the necessary space required to deliver effective services. Options suggested could be to use the available space for the Library and the TIC, or alternatively, for the Library and Customer Services.

The Town Clerk advised that this application was going to the North Area Local Council on April 19<sup>th</sup>. He advised that he and Councillor Swinbank had a further with NCC Officers the following Monday after which they would decide if someone should speak at the meeting. He added that the Town Council had until April 17<sup>th</sup> to let NCC know if anyone would be attending the meeting to speak and he would email councillors to ascertain if anyone wanted to attend.

Councillor Symmonds felt the Town Council needed to take the opportunity to highlight the issues with the proposed relocated library space and to explain that the proposed layout did not meet the needs of Alnwick.

Councillor Edge thought there should have been a public consultation undertaken so felt it might be advisable for the Town Council to speak at the North Area Local Council meeting.

## **P17/91**

### **Planning Applications**

#### **17/04143/FUL Land North East Of Windy Edge Alnmouth Road Alnwick**

**Northumberland** Hybrid Application Full planning permission: Erection of 81 residential dwellings (including 15% affordable homes), access road off Alnmouth Road, temporary construction access from Denwick Lane, landscaping, SuDS basin and other ancillary works. Outline planning permission with all matters reserved: Development of 23.36 ha for 189

residential dwellings (including 15% affordable homes), service roads, landscaping, SuDS basins and other ancillary works - Amended 21/03/18.

The Chair, Councillor Swinbank, explained this was an amended application from November 2017 and advised that the Alnmouth Road Residents Association (ARRA) would have 10 minutes to give a summary of their concerns and issues to the committee. Tricia Cresswell (TC) and Lynda Wearn (LW) would give the summary.

The Town Clerk explained that the amended application would still be a total of 270 dwellings the first phase had reduced from 87 to 81 dwellings. He issued the comments submitted by the Town Council for the previous planning application.

He advised that the main changes to the previous application were:

Buffer zone - between the existing houses and the new dwellings which had been 20m narrowing to 10m in the previous application had been increased to 30m narrowing to 20m. The Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan had indicated a buffer zone of 3 times that distance and that in 19 properties would be built in the ADNP buffer zone.

Access - Northumberland Estates had reported that discussions had taken place with Highways Officers at NCC but there was no evidence of the outcome of this in the application documents. They had introduced a 6.1m road with a wider footpath.

Use of Denwick Lane - Northumberland Estates had commented that they feel Alnmouth Road is suitable for all traffic and that Denwick Lane would be used for site traffic only.

Historic England – no objections raised but want further work undertaken.

Bridleways / Rights of Way – the Design & Access Statement contained a sentence about redefining a bridleway on the proposed site. NCC Rights of Way Officer had raised no objections to the application.

Layout – the overall layout had changes to accommodate the houses moved from the buffer zone to other locations on the site.

Section 106 – Northumberland Estates had confirmed that none of the proposed Section 106 items would be undertaken.

### **Public Comments:**

LW explained that there were a number of key issues for the residents groups ARRA and Allernburn Lea Residents Association especially around sustainability issues in relation to Policies in the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan (ADNP).

She explained that the ADNP leaves a much bigger buffer zone than the proposed application which whilst being moved slightly does not give enough space to be green zone and which they felt would end up as a dog toilet area.

ARRA felt that the new boundary in the amended application could result in many more properties being put on the site. She reported that NCC only consider housing boundaries and volumes in Neighbourhood Plans as indicative and needed to be supported by a Policy.

Northumberland Estates had confirmed that there would be no bus service on the development site.

There was also no mention of Broadband in the application.

TC explained that there were road safety issues with regard to the proposed Peter's Mill / Alnmouth Road junction site entrance. This is not a safe junction at all and the last 100 metres of road have significant problems with the road narrowing from 11.1m to 8.6m (6.1m road and 2.5m footpath).

Alnmouth Road junction – no diagram of visibility splays and no swept pathways, even though this is to be the permanent access. These are provided for the temporary haul road junction with Denwick Lane.

Highways report – there are no comments from NCC Highways Officers on the documents submitted in November or those submitted in March 2018. NCC Highways has declined to meet with AARA in spite of the grave concerns raised. This represents a failure of duty of care to local residents.

The Transport Assessment v3 submitted in March does not identify or adequately address the issues raised. It incorporates as Appendix 10 a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit dated March 2018. However a (clearly different) Stage 1 Road Safety Audit is both paraphrased and referenced, but not included, in the Transport Assessment submitted previously in November 2017. AARA had repeatedly requested a copy of the Stage 1 Road safety Audit referenced in the November document.

AARA must challenge the probity of the planning application as statements in relation to the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit(s) in either the Transport Assessment submitted in November or Transport Assessment v3 submitted in March 2018 must be untrue.

Councillor Wearn went to sit with the members of the public and did not take part in any further discussions or vote on this application.

#### Town Council comments:

The Town Clerk advised that none of the issues previously raised by Alnmouth Town Council had been addressed.

Councillor Harrington felt that the applicant had a duty of care to cover all the issues raised.

The Town Clerk advised that no comments from NCC Highways Officers had been included in either this or the previous application.

Councillor Harrington felt that NCC Officers were not looking at the issues and that road size and footpaths were a major issue. He felt that Highways comments were needed as soon as possible.

Councillor Swinbank advised that it was disappointing to have got to this stage without Highways information being available.

Councillor Symmonds said that the Town Council need to be reassured about the information being given and that at this stage the Town Council could not support the application.

The Town Clerk advised that all the information was not always submitted at the time that the Town Council makes their comments.

Councillor Swinbank felt the comments submitted for the previous application should be strengthened.

Councillors reviewed their comments submitted for the previous application and submitted the following comments:

The Town Council supports the principle of housing on this site, but **objects** to this planning application unless the following issues are fully addressed:

1. The Development Site Boundary is not in line with the Neighbourhood Plan proposed site boundary and as such, the envisaged significant buffer for the existing dwellings in the south east corner of the site is not provided.
2. Safe access to & from the site on Alnmouth Road is of paramount importance and NCC Highways will need to give careful consideration to this and be satisfied that this can be achieved, not only for pedestrians but also for cyclists particularly young people

accessing the BMX Track. In addition, the impact of the proposed junction on traffic flow and traffic speed on Alnmouth Road needs to be considered. The Town Council is disappointed that there has been nothing as yet in the public domain from NCC Highways, regarding this application.

3. The improvement of public transport, walking and cycling provision both within the site and off site and traffic will require infrastructure improvements, not addressed in this application. Future maintenance and management of the BMX track should also be addressed. The Town Council does not feel that items for possible Section 106 inclusion have been given proper consideration by the applicant and further discussions are needed.
4. Safe access to the proposed BMX track, from Fisher Lane and Alnmouth Road, must be maintained during the proposed development. It is also important to consider how the cyclists will safely cross from the combined cycle/footpath running through the estate to the BMX track.
5. In addition to the BMX Track, play facilities for younger children must be provided, and future management and maintenance addressed.
6. The future management and maintenance of Green Spaces, Trees and SuDS must be addressed (both functionally and financially) as part of any planning approval.
7. In principle, the Town Council would be supportive of the use of a permanent access road from Denwick Lane, if it satisfies NCC Highways.
8. Consideration should be given to improve the provision of bus routes and services serving the new development and new bus shelters.
9. Concerns about the suitability of the road construction for heavy vehicles, as raised by objectors, need to be addressed.

Comments on the previous plans submitted by the Town Council, from their Sustainable Transport Working Group, also form part of this response.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

The Site is allocated on the Neighbourhood Plan proposals map for Housing (**Policy H2**) with a guide capacity of 270. This is the largest site identified in the Plan. The plan suggests that the area is both developable and deliverable.

The Guideline requirements for the Site in the Plan states

'Design for the site needs to leave extensive green corridor down the east side of Allerburn Lea/West Acres housing, account for Fisher Lane Public Right of Way. Hedgerow and landscape structure, provide structural landscaping on and off site and provide access improvements to Alnmouth Road. The design may also have to account for A1 road noise. Improvements to public transport services to serve the site will also be required'.

In addition the text of the plan highlights 'that it will be necessary to use structural landscaping and green corridors between existing and new developments to protect the amenities and living conditions of existing residents on the edge of the urban area'.

The Neighbourhood Plan proposals map identified the proposed site boundary. The developer has mainly followed this, with one major exception which is the buffer area between the dwellings and site to the southeast section of the boundary (Oaklands and Tarrega) which despite an amendment is still much narrower than was envisaged in the plan. The developer says changes have been made to the boundary to accommodate site specific issues and there is no increase in the overall housing numbers. Some 19 dwellings are included in the part of the area that was envisaged as a buffer area.

### ***Relevant Neighbourhood Plan Policies***

<b><i>Housing requirements</i></b>	
<b>Policy H3</b> A mix of formats and sizes of dwellings is required	A mix of formats and sizes of dwellings is proposed including the provision of the required 15% affordable housing (10% rented and 5% discounted market value for sale or shared ownership). Phase 1 has 81 dwellings including 6 bungalows, 43 detached 2 storey and 32 semi-detached 2 storey. There is a mix of 2, 3, 4 and 5 provision. The first phase has only 2 private 2 bed provision (ignoring affordable provision). The Town Council would want to comment further on the housing mix in the later phases.
Under <b>Policy H4</b> requires consideration of Building for Life12 and the Lifetime Homes Standard-	The developer claims Building for Life 12 has been considered. A 12 question checklist is addressed, although some responses are subjective.
<b><i>Transport</i></b>	
<b>Policy TRA1</b> requires developments to have safe and convenient pedestrian access and the enhancement of provision for walking including public rights of way will be supported	There is an onsite provision of a footpath/cycle path alongside the main connecting road in the development. A number of other footpaths are shown, some of these eg Allerburn Lea to Fisher Lane) could benefit from upgrading, to improve pedestrian routes to school/town. Off site, very few improvements are suggested except for a possible pedestrian crossing on Alnmouth Road. This together with a number of pedestrian route improvements would assist with access to facilities including schools and the town centre.
<b>Policy TRA2</b> has similar requirements regarding cycling.	There is an onsite provision of a footpath/cycle path alongside the main connecting road in the development. This is 3m wide but decreases to just a footpath of 2.5m in the entrance to the site. Off site, very few improvements are suggested. A number of cycle route improvements would assist with access to facilities including schools and the town centre.
<b>Policy H2 (refers to improving public transport to the site)</b>	The travel plan contains details about raising awareness, promoting walking/cycling, publishing public transport information etc. To improve public transport, consideration could be given to bus services / routes serving the new development and new bus shelters.
<b><i>Environment</i></b>	
<b>Policy ENV1</b> requires amenity green space and natural and semi national green space in the site.	Plans show substantial planting and woodland areas are proposed. The layout includes the retention of paddocks, a proposed allotment area, and areas of public open space and amenity space including a village green and wildflower meadow area. Future management and maintenance of these areas is not addressed

<b>Policy ENV6</b> relates to the protection of trees	10 trees with TPO's need to be removed to facilitate access. These are a mixture of Limes, Yews, and a Cypress. In addition a further 16 trees are listed for removal and some hedgerows The development proposes some areas of new planting – Phase 1 has 77 new trees
<b>Policy ENV7</b> requires full landscaping and tree planting proposals to add to the distinctive character of the area	Plans show substantial planting and woodland areas are proposed. Future management and maintenance of these areas is not addressed.
<b>Policy ENV8</b> requires green infrastructure to be protected and the enhancement of public rights of way will be supported.	A public right of way and public bridleway pass through the development. Alternative proposals are suggested for the Bridleways. Diversion Orders will be required. NCC Rights of Way Officer does not object.
<b>Policy ENV9</b> requires major developments to have Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs).	3 SUDS ponds are being created. Future management and maintenance of these areas is not addressed.
<b><i>Heritage &amp; Design</i></b>	
<b>Policy HD1</b> seeks to protect the landscape setting and ensure they do not harm the distinctive landscape or historic character	A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment report is provided. Historic England (HE) and NCC Conservation Officer have no objections. HE has asked for an appropriate landscaping scheme on northern edge. The Gardens Trust still have some concerns. On the original application Natural England required more information on the impact on the Northumbrian Shore SSI and Northumbrian Coast due to increased recreational disturbance
<b>Policy HD4</b> relates to the approaches to the town and seeks to ensure they are in keeping with local character	A landscape and Visual Assessment report is provided –The scheme may need to consider effective off-site landscaping.

Councillor Wearn re-joined the meeting.

Councillors agreed to deal with the remaining planning applications by email.

**P17/92 Consultation on Street Naming 18/00552/SN**

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council had been asked for their comments on the proposed name of Redwood Rise, which had been suggested by the developer and to submit alternative suggestions for the naming of the new development on the site of Allerburn House. Councillors were asked to submit suggestions to the Town Clerk who would submit them to NCC.

**P17/93 Public Rights of Way Consultation comments**

The Town Clerk advised that he had sent the Town Council response to NCC.

**P17/94 Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.